



*Compass*  
RECOVERY COLLEGE

# Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

PROSPECTUS JANUARY - APRIL 2022

# Welcome

Compass Recovery College continues to **run free mental health and wellbeing workshops**, both online and in person.

Whether you are a returning participant or new to Compass Recovery College, there's **something for everyone**. The wide range of workshops we offer are an educational route to **recovery from mental health challenges** and **increasing positive wellbeing**.

Workshops focus on **self-management skills and living well**, with the aim of all our participants becoming experts in their own self-care. All our workshops are **co-produced**; designed and delivered by people with lived experience of mental health challenges together with mental health professionals. Our aim is for everyone to feel listened to in a safe space, with the opportunity to connect with others.

**Everyone is welcome and everyone is a participant**, whether affected directly or indirectly by mental ill health. So whether you are struggling yourself, or perhaps you are a carer, family member or professional who would like to know more about mental health and wellbeing, we can help.

**Your journey begins here.**



# Our Workshops



## Mental health workshops

Designed to help us understand mental health challenges and teach skills for self-management.



## Wellbeing workshops

Designed to improve wellbeing.



## Creative workshops

To explore our creative side.



## Social Sessions

informal, drop-in sessions to chat about how we are, meet new people or old friends.

These vary from one off workshops to longer series running for up to 10 sessions. Some of our workshops are online via Zoom and MS Teams, some are in community venues.

Check out our [website](#) for a full schedule of current workshops

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Make sure [register with us](#) (it's free!) for your chosen workshops:  
0118 9373945, [compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk](mailto:compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk)

# Mental Health Workshops



## WINTER BLUES, LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION

As winter approaches and days become shorter, some of us start to feel a little low in mood. Lack of sunlight leads to lower level of vitamin D which contributes to feeling low. Keeping up with our wellbeing and finding ways to feel more upbeat is not always that easy. Depression can set in and we can find it difficult to enjoy life, engage with others and make sense of the world around us.

This 3 week workshop will look into ways to support our wellbeing by taking care of our physical and mental health. We will look into ways of challenging those thinking patterns that can lead us to feelings of despair and we will work on creating an environment that can uplift our mood when we are feeling low.

Finding the right activity for us, the right support network and challenging any intrusive negative thoughts can lead to beating the winter blues, lifting our mood and living well.

3 SESSIONS



## MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN

Living with chronic pain can be very debilitating. It can have a great impact on our mental health as we struggle to engage with the world and others as much as we desire. In some instances, chronic pain can prevent us from leaving our houses; creating a world of isolation. Meeting friends and family outside our home can prove very challenging and that can affect how we feel emotionally.

Finding ways to live well with our chronic pain is not easy to do without help and support. In this 3 week workshop we will look into ways to maintain a good spirit in spite of our chronic pain. We will look into mindful practices to enjoy brief 'pain free' moments and we will practice some Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and mindfulness techniques to manage our chronic pain and live more fulfilling, happier lives.

2 SESSIONS

# Mental Health Workshops



## LIVING WITH BIPOLAR DISORDERS

Bipolar is a mood disorder characterised by extreme changes in mood. Although we all have mood swings, in bipolar disorders these can become unmanageable and overwhelming.

*In these workshops we will look at:*

- The facts and realities of bipolar disorder
- How it can affect our lives and relationships
- Common triggers and challenges
- How it is diagnosed and treated
- How you can manage it
- How you can support someone that you care about.

2 SESSIONS



## LIVING WELL WITH OUR VOICES

This group is a collaboration between voice hearers, professionals, and Peer Support Workers as we plan how to live with our voices, visual and audio hallucinations. The workshops are grounded on the acceptance of lived experiences of voice-hearing. Co-facilitated by a voice-hearer the workshops will focus on understanding and working with the voice-hearers' experience to produce a progressive group that is co-produced between the facilitators and the group participants.

6 SESSIONS



## LIVING WELL WITH OUR DIFFERENCES - SOCIAL GROUP

Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder can make you feel as if you are different to everyone else, but why do you need to be? This Social Group was created by someone living with ASD for autistic adults to socialise and discuss their diagnosis in a safe space. The workshops will focus on understanding and living with ASD. Group members will be invited to nominate topics for discussion.

6 SESSIONS

# Mental Health Workshops



## EMOTIONAL FIRST AID

Many of us have some knowledge of first aid and what to do to stop a nose bleeding or clean a wound, however emotional first aid is more complicated. These workshops will explore knowing what to do with our feelings, how to tend to them and make them better. We wouldn't put a sticky plaster over an infected wound and so we wouldn't bottle up and ignore our feelings either.

*In these workshops we will look at:*

- Gaining an understanding of emotions
- Tending to our emotions with care and compassion
- Making room for difficult emotions
- Emotions and our mental health
- Applying emotional intelligence to improve our mood and calm ourselves

**3 SESSIONS**



## WELLNESS PLANNING FOR CARERS

These workshops aim to help those of us with caring responsibilities to identify and articulate our needs. It provides a framework which can enable us to maintain our own wellbeing and manage difficult situations.

*These workshops will cover:*

- Reflecting on our strengths, values and current/potential resources
- Understanding what we need to do to stay well
- Building wellness activities into our daily routine
- Creating a wellness toolbox
- Developing confidence and resilience

**4 SESSIONS**

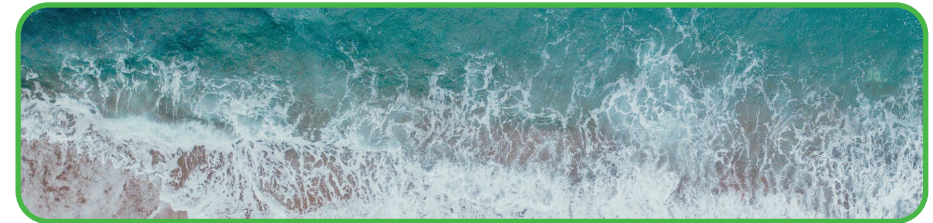
# Mental Health Workshops



## UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATION

Facilitated by a pharmacist, this workshop is designed to help you understand how your medication works, the importance of taking it as prescribed, and how not taking it as prescribed can increase your problems.

1 SESSION



## INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOSIS

The experience of psychosis, for example hearing voices or experiencing altered perception, it is surprisingly common. Being diagnosed with psychosis can be frightening and life changing event. There are lots of misconceptions and stigma regarding psychosis which can make coming to terms with it even harder.

*These workshops will cover:*

- Why we experience episodes of psychosis
- The symptoms and warning signs of psychosis
- How we can recover and prevent further episodes

2 SESSIONS

# Wellbeing Workshops



## GARDENING FOR WELLBEING

Gardening is a great way to get some exercise, connect with nature and gain a sense of achievement, all of which can support us in feeling well.

*We will look at:*

- The physical and mental health benefits of gardening
- Practical skills and tool use
- What to grow when and where
- Plant care
- Your gardening questions answered

6 SESSIONS



## BECOMING MORE RESILIENT

Resilience is not just our ability to bounce back, but also our capacity to adapt in the face of challenges whilst maintaining mental wellbeing.

*In these workshops we will look at:*

- How we deal with pressure
- Reducing the impact stress has on our lives
- Practical steps we can take

3 SESSIONS



## YOGA

Yoga can benefit both our physical and mental wellbeing. These workshops provide a supportive structured environment to learn new yoga skills so that you can take them away and continue to practice independently. Through gentle movement, deep breathing and concentration, yoga will leave you feeling relaxed and in a positive frame of mind.

6 SESSIONS



# Creative Workshops



## READING FOR HEALTH

These workshops bring participants together to enjoy great poetry and prose and relate them to objects in the Museum of English Rural Life (The MERL). Meeting in the beautiful surroundings of The MERL, the poems and prose are read aloud by a trained facilitator.

You can choose to read aloud but there is no pressure to do so, it's OK to just sit and listen. The facilitator will pause at several points during the reading and we will talk about the text, making personal connections with it in a relaxed and inclusive environment. Join us to share texts about working life in rural England and then explore the museum to make connections with relevant objects.

4 SESSIONS



## OBJECT HANDLING AT READING MUSEUM

This 1 hour workshop led by the Reading Museum is an excellent opportunity to handle real museum objects and discover how much we can learn from them.

If you are curious about what happens behind the scene of a Museum and how exhibitions are created; if you like history but want to learn about it in a new fun and interactive way, book a place and have fun at this workshop.

1 SESSION



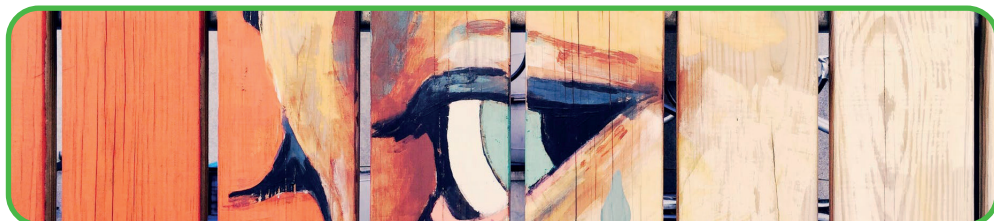
## THEATRE AND CREATIVE WRITING: STRANGER THAN FICTION

Join Reading Rep Theatre for five creative workshops inspired by the story of Jekyll and Hyde. We will explore the story of the real-life person who inspired Jekyll and Hyde, Deacon Brodie, who was a gentleman by day and a thief by night.

Participants will then have the opportunity to create their own pieces of fiction using real life people as inspiration. The format will be open and created by the group and their interests. The group is open to all, from those new to the arts to more experienced creatives.

5 SESSIONS

# Creative Workshops



## CREATIVE ART: WILDING HEARTS AND HEALING

Fun and experimental workshops which are open to everyone - from complete beginners to practicing creatives.

Led by arts facilitator Lisa-Marie Gibbs, this series will explore the themes and collections of The Museum of English Rural Life and use them as inspiration for creative responses. The programme will give opportunities to explore drawing, painting, collage, arts appreciation and much more and celebrate the power of the arts and heritage for healing and wellbeing.

For those who would like to, you can select work produced during the series to feature in an exhibition in The English Rural Life's community case where it will be displayed until June 2022. Join us to find a "creative flow" for wellbeing.

9 SESSIONS

## Social Sessions



### WALK-TALK-WALK

A gentle half hour walk around Palmer Park and a chance to talk if you want to.

WEEKLY

### COFFEE AND CHAT

These sessions provide informal opportunities to meet new people or catch up with old friends. Peer support workers or Compass staff will be there to provide informal support.

WEEKLY

### UNDER 25s COFFEE AND CHAT

Compass is teaming up with Reading University Student's Union to host a wellbeing coffee and chat on the University campus. These sessions provide informal opportunities to meet others for social support and wellbeing

WEEKLY

# Volunteer with us

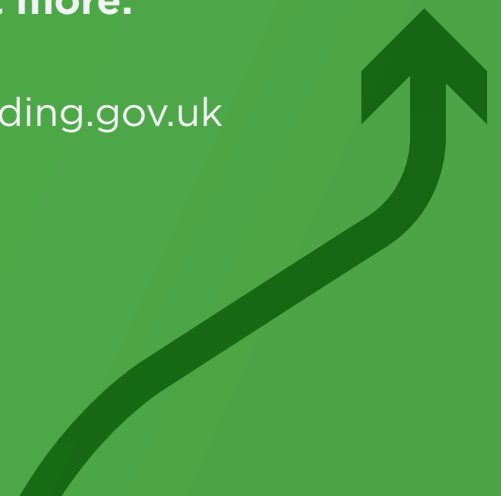
Do you have lived experience of mental health challenges and feel that you're in a place of recovery at the moment? Are you a carer or supporter of someone with a mental health problem? Are you a mental health professional or do you have a professional background which could aid others' wellbeing?

We welcome volunteers at Compass! Volunteering with us promotes self confidence and self-esteem, it helps others and it can help you build up your skills and knowledge too. From day-to-day tasks and administration work to co-producing new workshops or delivering on our existing workshops. We are looking for volunteers

from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Our Recovery College is driven by co-production and co-design, so we are looking to work alongside people who bring enthusiasm, skills and experiences to help us get it right.

**Get in touch with us to chat more:**  
0118 9373945  
[compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk](mailto:compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk)



# What Our Participants Say



“I have felt very welcomed and included by everyone at Coffee and Chat, I have felt better with myself since I joined this social activity”

*Coffee and chat participant*

“Thank you to all of Compass for what you do and how friendly you are. Your workshops are really helping me feel a bit stronger and I am so grateful to have found you. I think what you do is amazing.”

*Creative Art workshop participant*

“Being outside with good, positive company and with something positive to do is so healing”

*Gardening for Wellbeing participant*

“It was nice to listen to others’ experiences and make sense of my own experiences.”

*Why do we Hear Voices*

“I really enjoyed Introduction to Anxiety, I thought it was a very interesting course. It helped me to understand my triggers and how my body reacts to Anxiety. I have started to use some of the strategies suggested on the course... These have helped me a lot.”

*Introduction to Anxiety*



# FAQS

## What do I need to do in order to join?

If you've never attended a Compass workshop before, you will need to register as a new participant. Please email or call us so we can take down some details and register you on the workshops you're interested in.

## What will the format of the sessions be?

Our trainers provide resources and information and we hold discussions. No one is expected to mention their personal or professional life, their history or their physical / mental health challenges: however, if anyone does share anything, we ask you to treat what is discussed with complete confidentiality.

## How do I access the online workshops?

You will need access to an email address. You will need a PC/ laptop/tablet or phone and internet connection. All of our online workshops take place on Zoom or MS Teams. On the morning of the

workshop, you will be emailed a link which you will need to click on to access the workshop on the day. The email will include simple instructions. You shouldn't have to download any apps beforehand to access the workshop, but it might be useful to do so. If you need any help with the technology, please don't hesitate to contact the team.

If internet connection is an issue we can provide you with a dial in link.

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**Get in touch** to find out more about our drop-in information and registration sessions.



# Have your say

Co-production is at the heart of Compass Recovery College. Our workshops are developed with our participants, volunteers, carers and mental health professionals. This means that your feedback and input is essential.

We have regular feedback forums, where we focus on different topics so you can share thoughts and ideas with us.

### Compass Website:

[www.compassrecoverycollege.uk](http://www.compassrecoverycollege.uk)

### Compass Facebook:

Search Compass Recovery College

### Compass Twitter:

[twitter.com/RecoveryCompass](https://twitter.com/RecoveryCompass)

### Compass Phone:

0118 9373945

### Compass E-mail:

[compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk](mailto:compass.opportunities@reading.gov.uk)